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June 9, 2015

The Honorable Ray Franz  
Chair Regulatory Reform  
Michigan House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Franz,

Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA) supports the passage of House Bill 4598 to license Certified Professional Midwives (CPM). This proposed legislation for midwifery care is aimed at improving outcomes, increasing access, and lowering healthcare costs in maternal and child health in Michigan.

The Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA), established in 1982, is the largest membership organization for midwives who practice home birth in the United States, although our membership also represent hospital and birth center practitioners.

**The Midwives Alliance of North America calls on the state of Michigan to ensure high standards of safety for women and babies by establishing legal recognition of Certified Professional Midwives (CPM).** The Certified Professional Midwife has demonstrated proficiency as measured by studies showing that CPMs have admirable birth outcomes. The CPM is the only NCCA-accredited midwifery credential that includes a requirement for out-of-hospital experience. As maternal mortality rates continue to rise, many global organizations are urging countries to turn to midwives for safe, low cost alternatives to high, often unnecessary and costly, interventive birth. In a recent report, the United Nations advocated Midwives "as the unsung heroes of maternal and newborn health" and "urged greater investment in these vital healthcare professionals, who can prevent about two-thirds of deaths among women and newborns. Investing in midwifery benefits the health care system by allowing doctors and nurses to tend to other health needs, finds the report, which was coordinated by the United Nations Population Fund, the International Confederation of Midwives and the World Health Organization."<sup>1</sup>

In January 2014, The Midwives Alliance released the largest study of planned birth at home with midwives, based on high quality data, which demonstrates that among low-risk women, planned home births result in low rates of interventions without an increase in adverse outcomes for mothers and babies.<sup>2</sup> The CPM credential demonstrates a midwife's comprehension and qualification as a health care provider, *and the Midwives Alliance is proud to support this credential as an innovative and rigorous standard of professional competency.*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://unfpa.org/public/home/publications/pid/17601>

<sup>2</sup> Cheyney M, Bovbjerg M, Everson C, Gordon W, Hannibal D, & Vedam S. Outcomes of care for 16,984 planned home births in the United States: The Midwives Alliance of North America Statistics Project, 2004-2009.

***We ask that the State of Michigan recognize the importance of midwifery care in the maternal and child public health system by supporting HB 4598, an act relative to Certified Professional Midwives.*** The Midwives Alliance of North America is committed to all families having access to a qualified maternal and child healthcare provider who can best meet the needs of that particular family or community. As the US drops to almost 60<sup>th</sup> for maternal mortality/morbidity, we ask that Michigan ensure that those who are most vulnerable have access to the experts in low-risk, out of hospital birth. Midwives offer patient-centered care, which is often culturally sensitive as well as affordable, and can coordinate with other providers as a trusted part of the maternity system.

Thank you for recognizing the valuable contribution of midwives globally, and for ensuring that the constituents in your own state are not denied a critical choice in maternal health care options: Midwives.

Sincerely,

*Marinah V. Farrell*

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President, Midwives Alliance of North America